

Clatworthy Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2026 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Present: Sally Moran (Chair), Kevin Chesterman, Margaret Deer, Jonathan Douglas, Gemma Forster, Linda Sharp, John Ward, Frances Nicholson (Somerset Councillor), Norma Martin (Clerk).

1. Apologies

Chair Sally welcomed Gemma as a newly co-opted councillor.

Apologies were received from Cllr Sophie Macfarlane and Steven Pugsley (Somerset Councillor).

2. Minutes of meeting held on 4 November 2025

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4 November 2025 were confirmed correct and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising not covered on the agenda

None.

4. Update from Somerset Council

Councillor Frances reported that there was a general drive from the leaders of Somerset Council towards unnecessary and inappropriate standardisation. She highlighted the proposals regarding dogs; including to require them to always be on leads in public and to ban them from certain areas altogether (e.g. cemeteries, public parks, all areas with high footfall, etc); which follows the proposal to standardise parking charges across the county regardless of location or need. Public opinion will be sought in the coming months, but responses from local councils are encouraged now – especially to add to the restrictions.

There is still no published budget as the council does not yet know if the government will allow it to increase its tax levy without the expense of a referendum. An answer is expected imminently and, if granted, the increase will be substantial. There is a particular issue with Special Educational Need (SEN) funding which has previously been excluded from council overspend totals; its inclusion after the end of this FY will bankrupt many local authorities unless the government takes action.

Councillor Frances is particularly concerned that the Council have their priorities wrong. The focus should be on the Educational and Housing needs of children and families rather than dogs and car parks. She gave several examples of problems arising, especially with children with SEN, where the combined efforts of the departments involved (housing, education, health, social services, police and finance) caused more problems than they resolved.

5. Update from Exmoor LCN

Chair Sally reported that ongoing issues with potholes and the need for better road maintenance were raised and details of repairs that have been completed in the LCN area have since been published.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had been expected to attend the LCN meeting, but did not turn up, however the local community police representative gave an update on the (very little) crime in the area.

Lastly there was an update on the Dunster traffic lights upgrade: everything was going to plan, but drivers should be aware that delays of up to 10 minutes could occur at busy times.

6. Village Emergency Plan

Following the November meeting of the parish's Emergency Plan group, and with further input from the Exmoor LCN Emergency Plan meeting, an updated version was issued to councillors. The next steps are to ensure that all Clatworthy residents are aware of the plan, how to access it, and what to do should an emergency arise. It was suggested that copies of the plan would be available in the Village Hall and the Church as well as on the parish web site and that posters and a leaflet could help to advertise it.

7. Finance

7.1 Current position

Balance at Lloyds 29/10/25		4478.26	
Receipts	Ref	£	Details
Total Receipts		0.00	
Payments			
Clatworthy VH – Insurance	BACS 10/11/25	390.08	
Bank Charges		4.25	
Hugo Fox	D/D	11.99	Website monthly subscription – Nov 25
Bank Charges		4.25	
Hugo Fox	D/D	11.99	Website monthly subscription – Dec 25
Bank Charges		4.25	
Hugo Fox	D/D	11.99	Website monthly subscription – Jan 26
Total Payments		438.80	
Balance at Lloyds 1/2/2026		4039.46	

Spend against 25-26 budget	Plan	Actual	Comments
Audit fees	30.00	30.00	
Insurance – Parish Council	150.00	127.59	
Clatworthy VH – Insurance	450.00	390.08	
SALC membership	30.00	40.71	
Clerk/Councillor training	100.00		There are new councillors who might benefit
Postage & stationery	30.00		
Defibrillator	250.00		Intended for maintenance reserve
Phone box	50.00	102.84	
Parish Web site	160.00	119.90	
WAP – Wivey Link	0.00		Normally considered at February meeting
S137 (Local charities)	300.00		Normally considered at February meeting

7.2 Payments for authorisation

Rock Salt £160 (estimate), see 8.2 below, and grants £800 (total), see 7.4 below.

7.3 Review Management of Finances process

Councillors confirmed that the process is working satisfactorily.

7.4 Charitable donations

Councillors agreed the following donations for this financial year.

Wivey Link	£200
St Margaret's Hospice	£200 (s137)
Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance	£200 (s137)
Wiveliscombe 1 st Responders	£200 (s137)

8. Roads

8.1 Drainage, floods and potholes

No progress can be made on the blocked drain near Rock Cottage until the weather improves.

Despite the many works Highways have completed, there are still several outstanding potholes in the parish, which are made worse by the ongoing bad weather. Council will ensure that they have all been registered and note taken of the report references.

See also report from LCN (5 above).

8.2 Road salt

Highways have confirmed that the precautionary salting route still includes the road from Huish up to Rock Cottage, but does not continue through the village. It was suggested that the school bus drivers might be able to apply pressure to get the salting route extended.

In the interim 10x25Kg bags of rock salt will be ordered from ONLINEROCKSALT.CO.UK for the bin at the village hall.

Action: Norma

9. Planning

Planning application H/06/26/001 for the replacement of a section of bank and hedgerow by 15' gate on Syndecombe Lane. No response has been received from the neighbouring property and councillors saw no reason to oppose the application.

10. Other Matters for Information

The Risk Register has been updated following the risk review in November. Copies are available on request from the Clerk.

Meeting dates for 2025/26

9 February 2026, 11 May 2026, 10 August 2026, 9 November 2026

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.53 p.m.

In order to reduce ink usage and paper wastage, please note that from the AGM in May 2025, the Clerk will not provide paper copies at meetings of documents previously e-mailed to Parish Councillors, except by prior agreement with individuals. (Printed minutes and agenda will be available by default for Somerset Councillors.)